Advertising as a Motivator of Human Behavior – Theoretical Approach of Manipulation in Modern Society

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Abstract
Marketing is an art, used in everyday life, by producers, most of the time, to influence final consumer behavior. Advertising, as a marketing tool, is not linked, only to development of media, but currently is one of the main types of public communication and has effect, not only in economy, but also has higher effect on social relations. Advertising, in modern society, is one of the most influent factors in communication due to increasing role of media and its structure. At this moment, advertising represents a specific form of media communication, due to its wide action and is not just responsible for products and services selling and can no longer have, only, an economic role. It, also, has a motivation effect on people behavior, creates new value systems, as well as, changes the world perception values. Public unconscious mind can be influence, mainly, through symbols and through things. Mainly used in advertising, is symbolism, considered as the base of influencing people's unconscious mind. Russian researchers analyzed a lot of methods used in advertising which can influence consumer behavior. I set out to do an office job for analyze subliminal and other methods used in advertising which can influence public behavior, the sphere where it is used, for understanding of all techniques of influence and to compare emerging trends in manipulation analyzed by advertising researchers from different countries. I intend to do a research based on secondary data to realize that the manipulation of consumer or public behavior is it possible or not.

Keywords: subliminal stimuli, subliminal techique, advertising, marketing.

JEL classification: M37; M390.

Introduction

Advertising is an integral part of marketing. Modern advertising process, as communication, has been explored in wide variety of aspects. "In the world of advertising, phenomena, objects and images exist in the form of random mosaics; the boundaries between the world of things become blurred; in an advertising message, the consumer is present as an accomplice in the conventionally created advertising reality" (Gerashenko, 2006, p.18).

Modern advertising should be a benchmark for the internal satisfaction of its consumers, but not should only be for the level of successful sales of the advertised product. Advertising should correspond to the cultural mentality of the buyer, his picture of the world.

In USA, James Vicary was the first to make an announcement about subliminal stimuli, in 1957. Yet a half century ago, Ukrainian advertisers mentioned about some unitary entities created, at that time, which acted as an intermediary between advertising messages and not even the consumer, but his unconscious. In Russian researches, mainly in advertising, the same message or force which is supposed to unconsciously influence people's behavior, is known as - "25 framework". By definition of "25 framework" comes from the idea that people's brain is capable to receive information, only 24 frameworks per second.

Advertising in modern society

Marketing is a missing link, but it must be integrated into the larger context of the social system for understanding the importance of its links in the development process. (Nason and White, 1981)

A feature of modern reality is the actualization of mass culture, in general, and advertising in particular, as well as the intensification of processes that form mass consciousness. Advertising influences the approval of certain models of human behavior in culture, helps to rethink individual being on the basis of the same principles by which myth affects the mass consciousness. (Gerashenko, 2006)

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Modern advertising can offering to the person a simulated world. Today, television advertising plays a huge role. (Gerashenko, 2006).

"Persuasive communication depends on several factors: the personal history of each individual, the differences in education, personality, behavior etc., all these determining a different acceptance of a message. If we can say that repetition creates a basic structure, the suggestion, on the other hand, is produced in varied areas, actions in time and subtly manipulates the conscience. Especially the artistic emotion has effects in the plan of defusing suggestion. Any piece of art firstly produces a basic message, but it also generates some series of subtle, imperceptible suggestions. The manipulation experiences through language are themselves based on the capacity of suggestion of words, accrediting the idea that some persons have visual memory, while others excel in audio-reception". (Florea, 2016, p.264).

The theory of persuasion in advertising is a process of influence peoples. Persuasion typically uses information for influencing the receiver. "Persuasion is the act of attempting to change minds or get people to act. Persuasion is similar to subliminal projection in that it suggests something a bit distasteful, something more or less hidden, unfair; a subtle or not so subtle playing on manipulating people, perhaps by appealing to emotion"(Hornick, 2006, p.17).

Imposed information is like hypnosis, because it is perceived against the will. (Repie, n.d., p.1). As an example, is Kara-Murza, S., (2015) suggestion that, the consciousness manipulation campaign carried out in the USSR was extremely effective. There was manipulation of public consciousness, which he defined as it is "the colonization of their nation".

Mass-media influence

In modern society, where technologies have an increased importance and role, we must not forget about the human essence, namely the subconscious. The subconscious or unconscious is of a special finesse and cannot be perceived rationally, however "one aspect is however demonstrated: the subconscious zone is active, as proved by dreams, psychical diseases or art". Because of small number of researches about subliminal persuasion, there is not enough information to drawn a clear-cut conclusion, about "the way in which it influences the conscious". Either the semiotic fields until now could not explain "the whole journey of information impregnated subliminally." Semiotics can, only, sometimes, partially predict reaction of a person, but most of the time it only can approximately anticipate the reaction of the subconscious to the transmitted message. "One should not forget that repetition and the power of suggestion are two methods of immersing inside the conscious". (Florea, 2016).

Manipulation through nonconscious primes, by definition, can be delivered „either subliminally, in which case the prime themselves are not accessible to the person's awareness, or supraliminally, in which case the person is aware of the primes but not of their potential influence". (Broyles, 2002).

The russian marketer Gerashenco (2006) mentioned about two main ways of public consciousness manipulation: manipulation through the world of signs and the world of things, the main of which is the word of signs; the psychoanalytic foundations of the manipulation of consciousness in advertising are examined. Another one, including the theory of subliminal advertising, the essence of which is formulated by the James Vicary: the consumer picks up signals that exceed a certain threshold by the force of exposure, filtering out weaker or briefly temporary ones. "Semiotics utilizes a selection of graphical symbols (like icons), symbolic gestures (e.g., pointing movements), or verbal commands. The meaning of such interaction elements might be depending on everyday experience, is defined in style guides, or is given by the developer arbitrarily. This results in a distinct code a user has to learn in order to successfully operate the system. In case the symbols used in the interface are not widely spread and understood, a steep learning curve is the consequence. In contrast to this, subliminal communication requires the integration of spontaneous interaction mechanisms. These mechanisms are characterized by occasionally unexpected actions and results". (Riener, et al., 2011).

Advertising visual audio media text (as a multiplicity of text and its contexts), is saturated with diverse archetypal images, mainly binary in their psychological nature, correlating feminine and masculine levels of subliminal perception (Kosheliuk, n.d.).

Garshenco, analyze the basic techniques of manipulation used in different types of advertising:
- radio advertising mentioning about accidents or disasters;
- threats to the health of consumers, for example, radio advertising, which begins with "do you feel pain …";
- sound solution of radio advertising of medicines (ex.: heart palpitation);
- television advertising which include violence;
- repressed needs, which are obstructed by society;
- discrediting the concepts of good and evil, faith in God or love of the motherland;
- invasion of a person's self-esteem, his sense of confidence and stability;
- the promise of quick and affordable pleasures from eating, sports or prestigious things;
- using inscriptions "recommended by the association…";
- using the 25th frame.

Theoretical and Practical Concepts

Subliminal influence and advertising „attempts more generally have a controversial checkered past"(Broyles, 2002).

Over the year, taken literally, subliminal means stimulus "below threshold" (Broyles, 2006); below ("sub") the threshold ("limen") of human perception (Roggers, 1992-1993), the subject cannot identify the stimulus (Moore, 1982).

Vicary claimed that subliminal advertising is just a "soft form of advertising…a very weak persuasive effect" and the method itself slightly enhances traditional advertising (Repiev, n.d.).

Subliminal stimulation – are below the threshold of perception (Del Hawkins, 1970), the level of an individual's conscious awareness (Broyles, 2006), and it cannot be perceived, felt, etc. "Threshold means simply that some stimuli affect the organism, while other do not. Some smell are too weak to be detected, some lights too faint to be seen. But, as the intensity of smell or light increases, a point is reached at which it is detected or heard. This is the threshold point

(or limen). Stimuli that do not reach the threshold are known as subliminal. A fairly obvious implication is that a stimulus is 'subliminal' or below the response threshold for one person may not be subliminal for another. Furthermore, a stimulus that is subliminal at one time for a certain person may not be subliminal at another time" (Klass, 1958).

Subliminal perception – refers to the registration of a stimulus (Hawkins, 1970) which the observer is not attending to it consciously (Theus,1994) and have no evidence of the priming, before its effect is felt (Silverman, 1976).

"We are all protected by wise nature. She has developed a lot of safety mechanisms in us. One of them concerns information about the outside world. When this information proceeds in our brain through our senses, it initially comes with a "shallow processing" at the subconscious level. The information is lost; if in a very short time our consciousness does not demand it. Such information is called subliminal (sub – under, limen – threshold), it could not exceed the threshold of importance milking our reflexes and consciousness. In such a storm, we swim from morning till night in the subconscious ocean, without noticing it ourselves". (Repiev, n.d., pg.4)

One widely followed approach to the study of subliminal presentation (Merikle, 1994) has expanded to the misuse of the word (Broyles, 2006) and the hided pictures/words within some presented images or films. These subliminal embeds are visible only when are pointed out (Rosen, Singh, Surendra, 1992).

Russian marketing school defines subliminal stimulation as 25th frame. "The visual subliminal perceives 24 frames per second. In this sequence succession there can be inserted the 25th frame, in no relation with the visible message, yet perceived consciously by the human brain. The subliminal images are invisible at normal speed. The eye would not see them and the spectator would not question this image". (Florea, 2016, pg.264)

Subliminal stimulus can influence behavior and enhance perception only when people were motivated to pursue the goal (Strahan, Spencer, Zanna 2002); are effective in real-life settings and are producing changes in behavior of a person which was unaware of the influence of the priming manipulation (Bargh, 2016); it is a growing area of the study (Elgendi, et al., 2018) and it is necessary to extend studies on a larger scale (Anitei and Curelea, 2014). Moore (1988) has concluded that subliminal priming "may be either partially available to consciousness at least some of the time, or they may be so far below an objective threshold of awareness that they are operatively nonexistent".

Recent experiments and theoretical studies suggested that "preferences, attitudes and impression formation can be developed outside of an individual's beliefs about object's attributes" (Opre, Opris and Vonas, 2002), and is more likely „for products that are enjoyable but unhealthy" to impute subliminal manipulation to advertising. (Voloaca et al., 2011, p.450).

For better understanding of subliminal marketing, it is important to investigate and determine subliminal techniques, which are assumed to have some degree of covert manipulation.

Subliminal stimulus is below the consciousness awareness and to evoke a well-established fractional goal response involve:

(1) *backward messages* (various kinds of stimuli are presented tachistoscopicaly – meanly by quickly flashing it on a screen, without person consciously noticed (Rosen, Singh, Surendra, 1992));

(2) *potential advertising* influences as:

• using familiar images and words for arousal (Theus, 1994);

• hidden pictures in pictorial advertisement (Moore, 1982), an example of subliminal masking was used the embed "Rats" on the face of opponent in presidential election (Broyles, 2006));

(3) *"subaudible" stimuli as:*

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- *incorporating* of lower volume speech signal, below the word is heard, masked by sounds or music (Rosen, Singh, Surendra,1992);
- speeding up the presentation rate and masking by background speech or music, until message could no longer be consciously understood;
- using, backward messages which can be produced only at reverse playing;
- presenting different words which are at subliminal intensity levels;
- introducing of a very fine stimuli which even is difficult to determine as separated words is difficult (Moore, 1988);
- accelerating speech in low volume messages (Moore, 1982).

Demonstration of subliminal ('sub threshold') stimuli in visual media, without directly changing people behavior, can at least arouse emotions and influence assessments of completely different stimuli (Burkov and Matuzov, n.d.).

An implementation of subliminal communication in human-computer interaction "not only illustrates the potential of the application of subliminal techniques for improving human-computer interaction, but also highlights that there are still technical difficulties and unresolved problems limiting a broader deployment in the near future" (Riener et al., 2011).

"Due to the subtlety of the placement embedding and other promotional techniques, audience members are often completely unaware and, therefore, highly susceptible of the practice. The influence is sometimes so powerful that product placement's critics have sought federal regulation of the practice" (Hornick, 2006, p.7).

"In many states (USA, United Kingdom, Australia, etc.) there is a ban on the use of technology of subliminal messages, despite the skepticism about this phenomenon in the scientific community" (Pliusnin, 2014).

The main interest is that, according to some researchers (Broyles, 2006), it is confirmed that the general public opinion is that: subliminal messages are used in advertising, just as subliminal advertising is an important tool. Making a comparison to three earlier studies of perception and awareness of subliminal advertising, a result of our survey, of a sample of 127 persons, produced similar results to those of Broyles (2006). Broyles' study (2006) replicated an earlier study by Rogeres and Smith (1993), which replicated most of the earlier findings of research by Zanot, Pincus, and Lamp (1983) (see Table 1).

Table 1. People's perceptions about subliminal stimuli

	Zanot, Pincus, and Lamp (1983)	Rogers and Smith (1993)	Broyles (2006-2004)	Present sample (2020)
Familiar with concept of subliminal advertising	81%	74%	84%	92%
Of those who are familiar with subliminal advertising, those who believe advertisers use it	81%	68%	85%	91%
Of those who believe advertisers use subliminal advertising, those who believe it is effective	68%	72%	78%	86%
Sample size	209	400	266	127

As a result of the study, with over a span of more than 35 years with different samples, the results indicate, about the same results. Mainly people are familiar with subliminal (74%-92%), from this (68% - 91%) believe advertising use embeds and (68% - 86%) consumers believe that used subliminal advertising is effective (see Table 1). People, most of the time, act in reality from their perception of reality. "The public likes to believe the worst about

advertising, and that makes it difficult to refute subliminal advertising charges" (Broyles, 2006, p.404).

Conclusion

The boundaries of the manipulations of public consciousness admissible in modern advertising are investigated in the paper. Consumers prefer to believe that they are psychologically manipulated, in everyday life, through subliminal advertising, which is also relevant in this study.

For decades, subliminal advertising has been a concern for many researchers and marketers, in their scientific works. From the beginning of subliminal communication and persuasion appearance advertising schools and researchers, from USA, Canada, Romania, Russia and other countries had publish a lot of studies about priming, and the results were contradictory.

Marketing seeks to satisfy the needs of the consumer profitably, consumer research is the study of choices and behaviors which is important to the individual. Researching how powerful and typical nonconscious influences are in daily life, would provide suggestions for future research.

Despite, that scientists do not have enough information about the effect of unconscious consumption in consumer daily purchase habits, subliminal advertising is a recognized part of the culture, due to some studies.

It is important to conduct more research to investigate the effects of subliminal advertising and to establish patterns for identifying subliminal marketing.

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